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Muntafiq

Donkey Badawin

Chap. XLV

villages by the rivers to till the fields. They have no camels but use donkeys as their transport animals; the presence of large herds of donkeys is as distinctive of Shawîyah encampments in the desert as is that of grazing camels indication of the proximity of Badawin tents. By the Badawin they are regarded with not over-tolerant contempt, and though some of the Shawîyah, notably the Budur, are bold fighting men, no true nomad would intermarry with them. They have been dubbed felicitously in English Donkey Badawin

The 'Ajwad seem to have lost almost entirely the sense of confederacy. A member of one of their component tribes, if asked to define himself, would invariably give the name of his tribal unit, though when questioned more closely he would admit that his tribe formed part of the 'Ajwad as opposed to the Bani Sa'id or the Bani Malik. In former times, when the Muntafiq coalition was much more completely under the control of the Sa'adun than it is now, the latter appointed the family of Manna, Sunnis of Hijazi origin like themselves, as inferior headmen over the 'Ajwad, for which reason the group is sometimes known as 'Ajwad al Manna. The Manna, who are said to be of Arab stock, still occupy a titular position as chiefs. If a capable member of the family happened to be available he would be the natural leader in battle, and in an assembly of 'Ajwad shaikhs, Zamil al Manna, the present head of the house, would be given the highest place, but they have no executive power or tribal jurisdiction. The Al Wathal, once paramount, are still in existence, but they have fallen into unimportance.

The Bani Malik, though less homogeneous than the Bani Sa'id, are more closely knit than the 'Ajwad. They are mainly cultivators (Filih, Harrathah, Hadhr) and Ma'dan, men of the marsh who live by fishing, by the weaving of reed mats and by the breeding of buffaloes. Just as Zamil al Manna' is nominally leader of the 'Ajwad, so Badr al Rumaiyidh is chief of the Bani Malik, but whereas the Al Manna' are not 'Iraqi tribesmen, the Al Rumaiyidh are the paramount clan of a strong tribe of the Bani Malik, the Albu Salih, to which their real authority is restricted. Outside the limits of the Muntafiq league there are large bodies of the Bani Malik on the lower Tigris and in the Hawizah of common origin with the Bani Malik of the Euphrates. It is probable that at one time all were part of a single entity. Such